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S E C R E T ROME 000445

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/04/13

TAGS: [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [IT](#) [IR](#) [EXPORT CONTROLS](#)

SUBJECT: (S) AMBASSADOR ENGAGES PRIME MINISTRY ON SHIPMENT
OF PATROL BOATS TO IRAN

REF: A. ROME 399 AND PREVIOUS

[B](#). STATE 29285

[C](#). 01/31/03 EDDY-KILNER E-MAIL

CLASSIFIED BY: ACTING DCM SCOTT KILNER FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

[1](#). (S) AMBASSADOR SEMBLER, TOGETHER WITH ACTING DCM AND POLMIN, USED THE OPPORTUNITY OF A FEBRUARY 4 MEETING WITH GIOVANNI CASTELLANETA, SENIOR DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR TO PRIME MINISTER BERLUSCONI, TO RAISE CONTINUING STRONG U.S. CONCERNS ABOUT THE SHIPMENT OF HIGH-SPEED PATROL BOATS FROM ITALY TO IRAN, AND TO PRESENT POINTS PROVIDED IN REF B. ALTHOUGH CASTELLANETA SAID HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE CASE, HE QUICKLY GRASPED ITS SERIOUSNESS, GIVEN HIS PRIOR SERVICE AS THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR TO IRAN (1992-95). HE IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED THE IMAGERY OF THE BANDAR E ABBAS PORT FACILITY (REF C), NOTING HE HAD VISITED THE PORT HIMSELF. "I KNOW THAT THE IRANIAN NAVY USES SUCH BOATS," HE ADDED.

[2](#). (S) A/DCM UNDERLINED THE HIGH-LEVEL OF USG FRUSTRATION AT THE LACK OF GOI ACTION TO IMPEDE SUCH EXPORTS, DESPITE OUR NUMEROUS ENTREATIES GOING BACK MANY MONTHS. PARTICULARLY PERPLEXING WAS THAT THE MFA TELLS US IT KNOWS THESE FAST BOATS ARE GOING TO THE REVOLUTIONARY GUARD (ROME 293), BUT STILL REFUSES TO CONSIDER THEM AS DUAL USE. SECRETARY POWELL, WE CONTINUED, HAD FELT COMPELLED TO RAISE OUR CONCERNS DURING HIS MEETING IN JANUARY WITH FOREIGN MINISTER FRATTINI. FRATTINI HAD ASKED FOR MORE INFORMATION, WHICH WASHINGTON PROVIDED AND THE EMBASSY DELIVERED TO THE MFA LAST WEEK (REF A). THE MATTER WAS NOW PARTICULARLY URGENT, GIVEN THE REPORTED ARRIVAL IN NAPLES OF ADDITIONAL PATROL BOATS AND RELATED ACCESSORIES FOR IMMINENT DELIVERY TO IRAN. THE U.S. URGED THE GOI TO PREVENT THE ONWARD SHIPMENT OF THESE ITEMS. THE U.S. BELIEVES THE GOI HAS THE LEGAL AUTHORITY TO TAKE ACTION; WHAT IS REQUIRED IS THE POLITICAL WILL TO DO SO.

[3](#). (S) WE CONCLUDED BY REQUESTING THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE GIVE DIRECT ATTENTION TO OUR CONCERNS. CASTELLANETA SAID HE NEEDED NO CONVINCING OF THE DANGER POSED BY THE IRANIAN MILITARY AND WOULD LOOK INTO THE MATTER RIGHT AWAY. SEMBLER

2003ROME00445 - Classification: SECRET